

10 October 1966

The Honorable Clark M. Clifford, Chairman  
President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board  
Executive Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Clark:

I have given a good deal of thought to the suggestion made by General Taylor at the Board meeting on September 29th to the effect that steps might be taken to designate the Director of Central Intelligence as Executive Chairman of the USIB.

I understand that such a designation has been helpful in the case of the Under Secretary of State in his role as presiding officer of the Senior Interdepartmental Group. The USIB, however, already has an established method of operation which I believe is working reasonably well. This procedure has its basis in the provisions of NSCID 1 and has been developed by usage over the years. While I am grateful for the expression of the Board's support which is inherent in General Taylor's suggestion, I believe that such a change would actually not confer any additional effective authority on me in my capacity as USIB Chairman. On the other hand, raising the issue at this time could conceivably have an adverse effect on the cooperation and collaboration generally evident in the USIB, and might be interpreted as an indication of a feeling that the Director of Central Intelligence is in a weak position.

The Executive Chairman concept, as expressed in NSAM 341, gives such an official full powers of decision on all matters within the purview of his group, with the caveat that a member who does not concur may request referral of the decision to the next higher authority.

Under NSCID 1 the USIB reaches its decisions by agreement. The Chairman determines that a given position represents a consensus of the Board and this position is considered agreed unless a dissenting member expressly requests that the issue be referred to the NSC. Such an appeal has almost never been requested. On occasion,

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when a number of USIB members have disagreed with a position propounded by the Chairman, he has decided to remove the issue from the USIB forum and resolve it through other channels, including reference to higher authority.

Thus, since there is necessarily a right of appeal to higher authority in either case, it seems doubtful to me that an Executive Chairmanship would in fact give the DCI substantially greater ability to overrule any serious differences in USIB than he now has.

In accordance with the agreement reached at the September 29th Board meeting, I am enclosing a suggested draft of a letter which the President might address to me. I have put this in the form of a rather informal communication which serves specifically to reaffirm the provisions of the President's earlier memorandum to Admiral Raborn on the subject of the DCI's responsibilities and also to identify the problem posed by the rising costs of intelligence activities; to recognize the absence of managerial control by the DCI over many of these expensive programs and the necessity for collective and coordinated action between the DCI and the heads of departments to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall intelligence effort. The wording of the letter is intended to resolve any ambiguities which exist as a result of differences between the earlier letters issued respectively by President Kennedy and President Johnson. It makes it clear, for example, that the DCI is to work directly with heads of departments who are enjoined to collaborate with him in efforts to improve intelligence activities.

When you have had a chance to look the draft over, I should greatly appreciate an opportunity to talk to you about it.

Cordially,

/s/ Richard Helms

Richard Helms  
Director

Enclosure

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DRAFT

Dear Dick:

I wish to re-emphasize the views expressed to your predecessor in my memorandum of 24 September 1965 concerning the high importance of efficient management of the total United States foreign intelligence effort which is vital to our national security and the success of our foreign programs.

At the same time, we must all recognize that the costs of intelligence activities, in terms of both money and manpower, are becoming an increasingly significant item in the national budget. New and sophisticated intelligence collection devices not only are very expensive in themselves, but also require additional and substantial outlays of manpower for processing and analysis of the material collected. We must hold these costs and manpower commitments to reasonable dimensions without compromising our ability to provide adequate intelligence support for the national security.

I recognize that you do not have direct control over all the assets which contribute to the foreign intelligence program of the Government. Nonetheless, I expect you, as Director of Central Intelligence, to guide and coordinate the intelligence community as a whole, and to take the lead in assuring that the intelligence necessary to the Government's operation is collected, evaluated,

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and disseminated with utmost efficiency. I shall expect the heads of departments and agencies having responsibilities in the foreign intelligence field to give you their full support and cooperation. In addition, I want you, working with them, to insure that all foreign intelligence programs and activities of this Government are evaluated and conducted efficiently and effectively.

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